BIG CAT RESCUE'S

BIG CAT TIMES

SUMMER 2019

BIGCAT RESCUE
A NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL SANCTUARY
1992 27 YEARS 2019

BIGCATRESCUE.ORG

BEACHER - SAVANNAH CAT

A MESSAGE FROM BCR PRESIDENT & EDITOR

Jamie Veronica

It looks like this Summer is going to be especially hot. We have already reached the mid 90's and it is only May!

It seems as though things never slow down and the past few months have been no exception.

We rescued four new big cats... well sort of. Nearly four years ago tigers Dutchess, Jasmine, and Sapphire and leopard Jinx came to Big Cat Rescue after being seized by the Ohio Department of Agriculture from their non-compliant owner. A battle of ownership rights lingered on for years all the while we were unable to publicly announce these cats were residing at Big Cat Rescue. Once referred to as the Witness Protection Cats, the Fab Four have finally been awarded a permanent home here at the sanctuary. We have been stockpiling photos and videos of these amazing cats over the years and are so happy we can finally share them with you.

The Bobcat Rehab Team proudly released brothers Bravo and Tango back into the wild. No sooner had we returned from the release we received a call to rescue a female bobcat who had been trapped for being a nuisance. This young mother gave birth to three kittens in the trap. The short amount of time this family spent in our care provided valuable insight into the natural process of rearing wild kittens. This new information will help us improve our orphan care protocols immensely.

Big Cat Rescue has always been at the forefront of utilizing technology and social media to spread awareness regarding the plight of big cats in captivity. In keeping with this mission we have two exciting projects to share with you. One is an Augmented Reality Zoo and the other is the completion of an interactive experience with a CGI (Computer Generated Imagery) tiger.

There is so much more to read in this issue of the Big Cat Times, so go ahead, dig your claws in and devour it!

BIG CAT RESCUE

A NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL SANCTUARY

Big Cat Rescue, one of the world's most effective accredited sanctuaries for exotic cats, is a leading advocate in ending the abuse of captive big cats and saving wild cats from extinction. We are home to over 60 lions, tigers, bobcats, cougars, servals and other species of exotic cats, most of whom have been abandoned, abused, orphaned, saved from the fur trade, or retired from performing acts.

The sanctuary, located on 67 acres in the Citrus Park area of north Tampa, was founded in 1992 and is a 501c3 charity.

Big Cat Rescue is accredited by the Global Federation of Sanctuaries, certified by Independent Charities of America as a "Best in America Charity," rated 4 Stars by Charity Navigator, and is part of a global coalition including HSUS, IFAW, WWF, GFAS, Born Free USA and other animal protection groups working together to end big cat abuse.

Read more about Big Cat Rescue and the cats who call it home at BigCatRescue.org

Tour Info:
BigCatRescue.org/Tickets

JOE MALDONADO CONVICTED ON ALL CHARGES!

2 MURDER FOR HIRE CHARGES AND 17 WILDLIFE CHARGES

BY HOWARD BASKIN BCR TREASURER

Two issues ago we cryptically reported to you that Joe Maldonado, FKA Joe Schreibvogel, had been arrested on two counts of "murder for hire" for seeking to hire two different individuals to murder our Founder Carole. We could not say more without risk that anything we said impact the trial, which is now over. So as famous reporter Paul Harvey used to say, here is "the rest of the story," abbreviated to fit our space here.

For new readers, Maldonado for many years was, in our view, one of the most notorious tiger cub abusers. His Wynnewood, Oklahoma zoo constantly bred cubs so they could charge people to pet them and take photos with them. Undercover video showed the cubs being physically punished to diminish their natural behaviors. (For more on him and his zoo see TigerCubAbuse.com.) In addition to offering cub petting at his zoo, Maldonado had a traveling show. The tiny cubs and other animals were carted around to malls throughout the Midwest and Southwest where the cubs would typically be on display in cages in the malls for petting from Wednesday to Sunday. The cubs were deprived of sleep and sometimes clearly sick.

In 2010 we started contacting the malls to educate them about what National Geographic this week called the "dark truth" behind the cub petting. One by one they began refusing to allow his abusive exhibit in the malls. (To read National Geographic's expose on wildlife tourism visit http://bit.ly/darktruth or Google nat geo animal tourism.)

Joe's response was to rename his traveling show "Big Cat Rescue Entertainment" to make people think it was Big Cat Rescue operating the exhibit, using a logo similar to ours. To protect our name and reputation we had no choice but to sue him in federal court for violating our intellectual property rights. We filed the suit in early 2011. We won a $1 million plus judgment in 2013, recorded the judgment in Oklahoma, and have spent the six years since then in an ongoing legal process to collect, which is a whole story unto itself too long for here.

In November 2017 I was sitting at my desk when the phone rang. It was U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) Special Agent Matt Bryant. Agent Bryant advised that FBI Agent Andy Farabow was on the phone with him. I had a brief dialog with Special Agent Bryant back in 2015 when some depositions we took in the lawsuit gave indications that Joe might be involved in illegal wildlife activities.

Over the years Joe had increasingly posted online both implied and sometimes very overt threats on Facebook and in videos of harming Carole. In one of those he displayed a blow up doll with a blonde wig. He said "you wanna know why Carole Baskin better never, ever, ever see me face to face...?" and then pulled out a large revolver and shot the doll through the head. In addition, on two separate occasions, once in 2015 and again in early 2017, people who were involved with the zoo contacted us to warn that Joe had tried to hire them or a relative of theirs to kill Carole.

It was one thing to hear these reports from someone at the zoo. But the call from Special Agents Bryant and Farabow took this to a very different level for us. They advised that Joe was actively trying to hire someone to kill Carole, that they were monitoring the situation, but that we should take precautions. Among those were installing security cameras and blinds at our home, carrying guns in our cars, removing the magnetic Big Cat Rescue signs from our car doors, and being very wary any time we stopped for gas or parked anywhere. Carole stopped riding her bicycle to and from the sanctuary during most of the investigation.

In the ensuing months, from time to time I would check in with Special Agent Bryant. Finally in August 2018 Joe was arrested on the two counts of murder for hire. One count was for trying to hire a former felon who was employed doing lawn care at the zoo. The other was for trying to hire an FBI

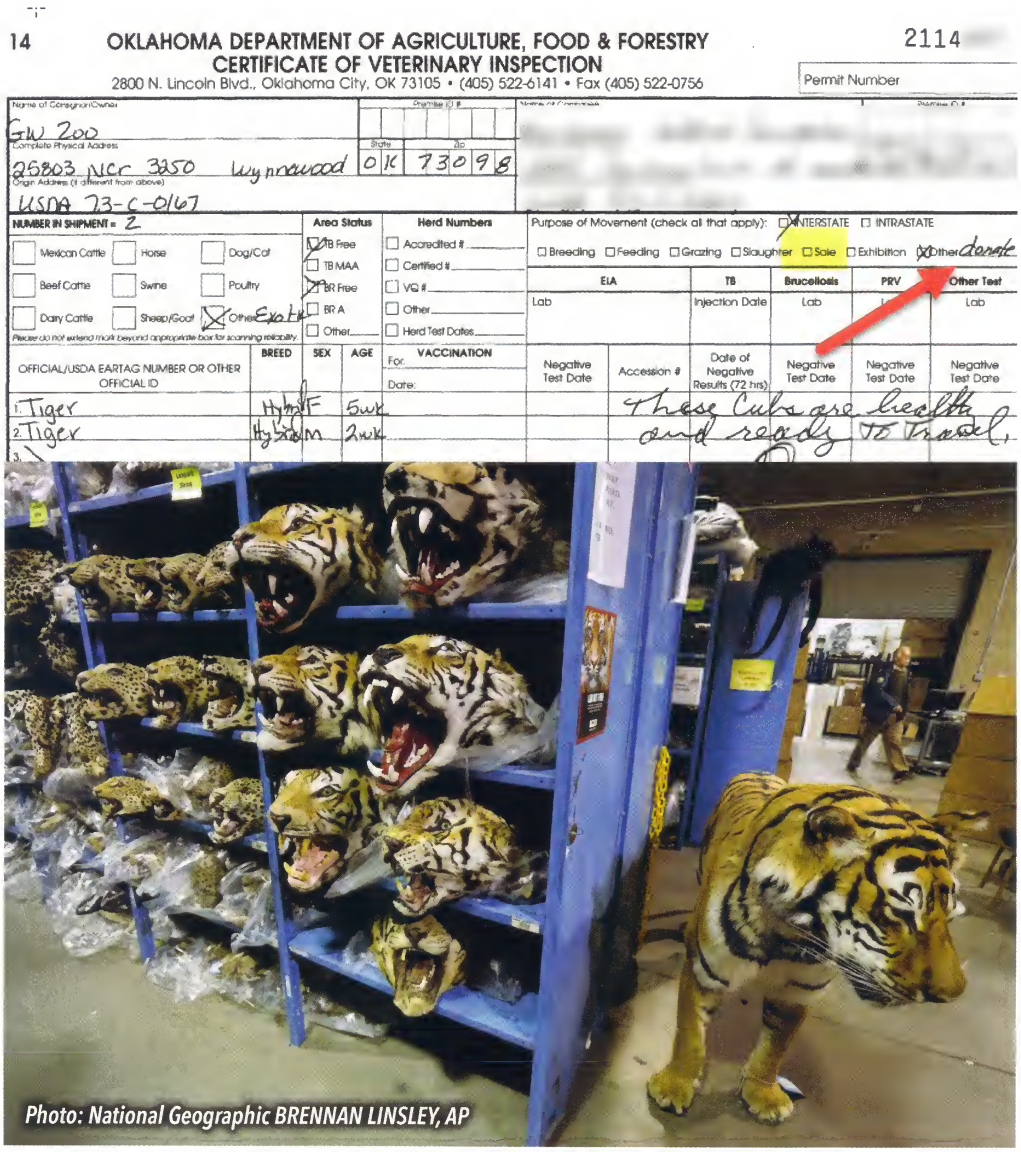
undercover agent who was brought in as part of the investigation.

Meantime, Special Agent Bryant completed his investigation of Joe's wildlife activities and Joe was subsequently charged with 17 additional counts. Five of these were violations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) "take" provision. The definition of "take" includes killing. It is hard to even write this part. In order to make room for some tigers Joe was going to be paid to board by a circus, he selected five of his non producing tigers, shot them in the head at close range with a shotgun, and buried them in a group grave on the zoo property.

Four of the charges were violations of ESA prohibition against selling tigers without obtaining a Captive Bred Wildlife (CBW) permit. Many of our supporters were actually involved in this in a way they likely will not realize until they read this. In 1998 USFWS implemented the "generic tiger rule" that said that it was not necessary to obtain a permit to sell a tiger if it was not a pure subspecies. Only about 300 tigers that are in the large AZA zoos have their heritage tracked to insure they are pure subspecies. All of the tigers at roadside zoos are of mixed subspecies, mostly a mix of Bengal and Siberian, and many are inbred in addition.

Back in 2011 we and a number of the large animal welfare groups began a campaign to urge USFWS to rescind the generic tiger rule and make all tigers subject to requiring a permit in order to sell a tiger across state lines. USFWS published the proposed rescission for public comment and thousands of you responded to our alert asking you to send comments in support. Your action was successful and in 2016 the rule was rescinded.

Prior to the 2016 rescission of the rule it was legal for Joe to sell cubs to other USDA licensed facilities without a permit. The rescission meant he had to get a permit from USFWS to do so. In order to get such a permit, the applicant is supposed to show that the sale has some conservation purpose. Of course his transfers of cubs for petting had no such purpose. And the process of applying for a permit usually takes many months and involves publishing the proposed application in the Federal Register for public comment.



14 OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & FORESTRY
CERTIFICATE OF VETERINARY INSPECTION
2800 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73105 • (405) 522-6141 • Fax (405) 522-0756

2114

Permit Number

Name of Consignor/Owner: GW Zoo
Complete Physical Address: 25803 NCR 3850 Wynnewood
State: OK Zip: 73098
Origin Address (if different from above): USDA 73-C-0167

NUMBER IN SHIPMENT = 2

Mexican Cattle / Horse / Dog/Cat / Beef Cattle / Swine / Poultry / Dairy Cattle / Sheep/Goat / Other Exotic

Area Status: TB Free / TB MAA / BR Free / BR A / Other

Herd Numbers: Accredited # / Certified # / VS # / Other / Herd Test Dates

Purpose of Movement (check all that apply): INTERSTATE / INTRASTATE
Breeding / Feeding / Grazing / Slaughter / Sale / Exhibition / Other donate

ELA	TB	Brucellosis	PRV	Other Test
Lab	Injection Date	Lab		Lab

OFFICIAL/USDA EARTAG NUMBER OR OTHER OFFICIAL ID	BREED	SEX	AGE	VACCINATION For: Date:	Negative Test Date	Accession #	Date of Negative Results (72 hrs)	Negative Test Date	Negative Test Date	Negative Test Date
1. Tiger	Hybrid	F	5wk			These Cubs are health				
2. Tiger	Hybrid	M	2wk			and ready to Travel.				
3.										

Photo: National Geographic BRENNAN LINSLEY, AP

To evade this law, according to testimony at the trial, Joe and others in the industry would indicate on the transfer forms that the transfer was a donation instead of a sale and would accept payment for the sale in cash. According to one witness this had been a common practice in the industry for 20 years, even during the time the generic tiger rule was in effect. But, after the rescission, such sales without a permit became violations of the ESA.

The remaining 8 charges were for lying on the transfer forms by indicating that these sales were actually donations. That is a separate violation of another federal animal welfare law, the Lacey Act. A witness who worked at the zoo for many years and delivered the cubs to buyers and accepted the cash payments

testified that he estimated Joe had done this with about 100 cubs over time.

The murder for hire charges have generated much of the media attention. Some stories written may focus only on that. But other reporters we have spoken with seem to realize that this is truly a landmark case in animal welfare law and that the big picture here is the mistreatment of captive big cats.

It is extremely difficult to build a wildlife trafficking case when the transactions take place using cash leaving no paper trail of payment. While the murder for hire investigation went on for about nine months, the investigation into Joe's wildlife trafficking had been underway for years. There had been reports of illegal sales of tiger cubs by past workers at the zoo, but none had the kind of rock solid proof required to make a strong criminal case. It appears that the murder for hire investigation helped bring the wildlife investigation to a point where it could be prosecuted. This was also the first time the rescission of the generic tiger rule came into play – i.e. all of our work to urge rescission finally paid off. The testimony revealed in a vivid way how the handful of cub petting exhibitors and others have evaded the law for years. We are hoping that some of the media work being done on the case will include the bigger picture of the abuse associated with the cub petting industry and captive wildlife in general.

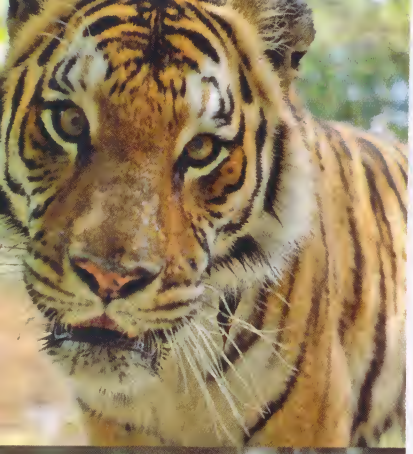
The trial started on Monday March 25th and ended Tuesday April 2nd. Carole testified on Tuesday March 26th and stayed wonderfully cool and calm as Joe's defense attorney badgered her. USFWS brought in extra officers who transported us back and forth from the hotel to the courthouse for our safety, and had us enter via a back entrance. We left the day after Carole's testimony. It was a tense few days after that as people we knew who stayed for the full trial reported to us on the day's events each evening. Joe only had to convince one juror to have a hung jury. He took the stand in his own defense, which was pretty much his entire defense. The jury took only a few hours to come back with a verdict of guilty on all 19 counts.

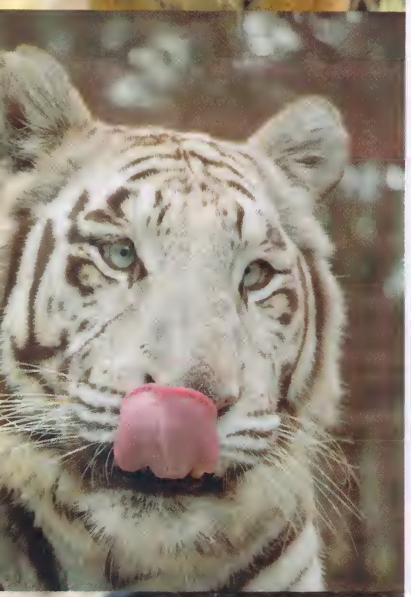
From what we understand, each murder for hire charge carries with it a maximum sentence of 10 years. It is a bit heartbreaking to realize that the maximum sentence for killing those five innocent tigers is only one year for each count. In contrast, the eight violations of the Lacey Act each carry a maximum sentence of 5 years. We are told that the sentencing hearing should take place sometime later this year.

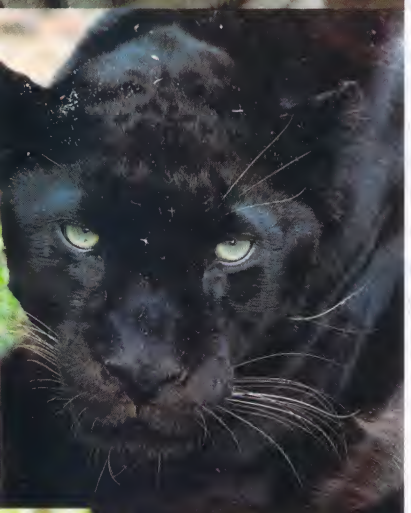
Unfortunately the zoo continues to breed cubs for petting and our seemingly endless lawsuit now focuses on the current operator. But at least Joe is held in jail without bail and hopefully will end up there for a long time.

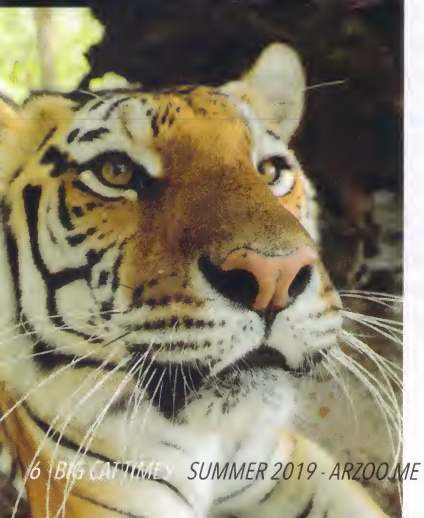
We are enormously grateful to the special agents who worked this case and the prosecutors who brought Schreibvogel to justice. Importantly, we also want to thank the many people who helped us get the generic tiger rule rescinded by sending in comments when it was published in the Federal Register. That played a critical role in this case, and we hope the information developed in this case leads to more prosecutions.

However, the real solution is to stop the cub petting altogether. YOU can help us make that happen, just like many of you successfully helped us get the generic tiger rule rescinded, by calling Congress in support of the Big Cat Public Safety Act. GRASS ROOTS ACTIVISM WORKS! It only takes two minutes using our simple automated system by sending a text from your cell phone. Please visit BigCatAct.com and add your voice to end the nightmare of cub petting abuse.









FOUR BIG CATS FREED
FROM WITNESS PROTECTION

BY SUSAN BASS DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

ALMOST FOUR YEARS…that is how long Big Cat Rescue has waited to officially introduce our four big cats which were seized in 2015 from Ohio's Tiger Ridge Exotics roadside zoo and owner/operator Kenny Hetrick by the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA). We are so excited for you, our amazing supporters, to get to know our three precious female tigers Dutchess, Jasmine and Sapphire and gorgeous male black leopard Jinx. We know you will fall in love with them just as we have!

Some background: In October 2011 in Zanesville, Ohio, a private owner of dozens of big cats and other wild animals named Terry Thompson opened their cages and turned them loose before committing suicide by self-inflicted gunshot wound. Authorities were forced to shoot and kill 38 big cats and 10 other animals as they roamed the town loose that evening. As a result of this tragic massacre, Ohio passed a strong law banning the private possession of big cats. Like all such bans, anyone who already owned exotic cats would be allowed to keep them; owners were simply required to register their cats with the state (by filling out a form saying how many cats and what kind they had) and they were not allowed to buy or breed more. Most people complied or capitulated when ODA began enforcing the rule.

But Tiger Ridge Exotics owner Kenny Hetrick thumbed his nose at the law and refused to report how many dangerous wild animals he owned. Hetrick's facility had also racked up numerous USDA violations prior to the seizure, including failure to provide adequate veterinary care, repeated failure to provide animals with a proper diet, failure to provide animals with clean water, failure to provide animals with clean, dry enclosures, and failure to comply with federal safety requirements.

Jinx loves Halloween because he gets to tear apart his favorite enrichment

Dutchess using the massive logs in her enclosure as a scratching post

In January 2015, ODA seized his 11 wild animals – 10 big cats and a bear – and initially housed them at the state's temporary animal holding facility in Reynoldsburg. A few months later ODA awarded temporary custody of the animals to three sanctuaries including Big Cat Rescue pending the final outcome of the litigation. Dutchess,

Jasmine, Sapphire and Jinx arrived at Big Cat Rescue in August 2015. We have been taking care of these four magnificent cats at our own expense every day since.

Hetrick took his legal battle for the return of his cats all the way to the Ohio Supreme Court, which maintained in 2018 that ODA had acted appropriately in seizing the animals. Then ODA filed a lawsuit for permanent possession of the animals, which was the final step before awarding the sanctuaries, including Big Cat Rescue, permanent custody of the cats in our care for the last four years. Hetrick did not fight this final lawsuit. We were officially awarded permanent custody of the four big cats April 30, 2019.

It has been a long road and there were several stipulations Big Cat Rescue agreed to back in 2015 in order to temporarily house the four cats, including not discussing the situation of the cats or sharing their

Sapphire is very mischievous and is always excited to get new toys and enrichment like this Christmas tree

information or photos/video on our social media sites. We even changed the names of the cats after their arrival (we will continue to use their current names). This is why you may be surprised to learn these three female tigers (Sapphire is a white tiger) and one

Jasmine spends alot of her time cooling off in her pool, she especially loves to splash her keepers!

handsome male black leopard have been housed at Big Cat Rescue for almost four years but you've probably never heard about them! Well that's about to change. We have already started to share numerous adorable photos and videos we've taken of these cats over the last four years. And of course there will now be lots of new photos and videos so you can get to know each of their personalities!

We know very little history about the cats; we believe Sapphire was born in 2010 and Jinx was born in 1999. Records for Jasmine and Dutchess are missing. But we DO know all four of these cats have been loved from the very second they arrived at Big Cat Rescue. And we plan to keep giving them a lifetime of love, nutritious food, excellent vet care, and enrichment.

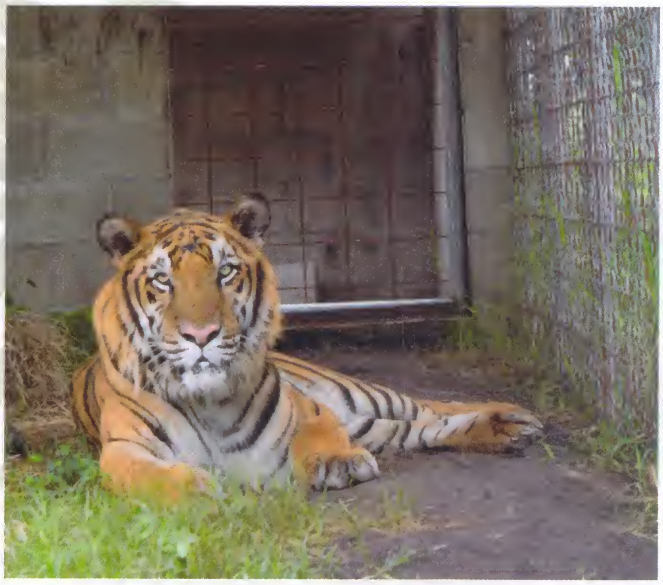
Thank you for your ongoing support of our cats and our sanctuary. It is only because of the donations we receive from donors like you that we can continue to rescue and care for big cats. If you'd like to be one of the first to support the lifetime care of these four beautiful cats, you can do so here:

BigCatRescue.org/give

Dutchess enjoying her turn in our 2.5 acre Vacation Rotation Enclosure

GUATEMALA TIGER RESCUE UPDATE

BY HOWARD BASKIN BCR TREASURER



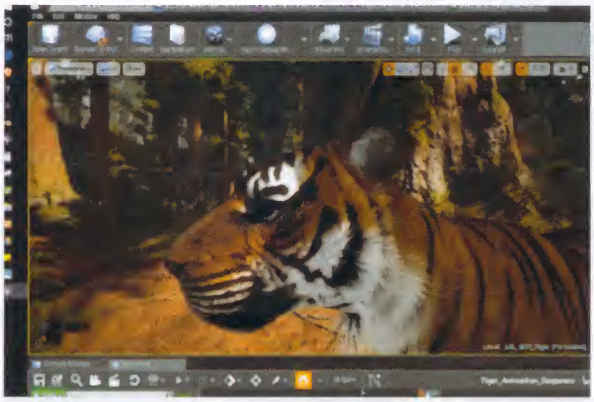
After many months our import application finally got to the next step and was posted in the Federal Register for 30 days for public comment. The next steps are two processes still to go through at US Fish & Wildlife Service, then we hopefully get the import permit, then ADI applies for the Guatemalan export permit. We are hoping, fingers crossed, to complete all of this by the end of June and then make the travel arrangements to finally bring our boys to their new home in July.

FIRST CGI TIGER ON OCULUS!

BY CAROLE BASKIN BCR FOUNDER & CEO

We believe that in the not too distant future we will see Virtual Reality (VR) 360 video and Computer Generated Images (CGI) create experiences that are so much more thrilling and so much more educational than seeing an animal languishing in a cage that zoos will evolve away from animals in cages and replace them with these experiences. Our intent is to be a leader in showing what these technologies can accomplish in order to foster this evolution. We have been working on VR for a few years with exciting results. The technology has improved dramatically while cost has dropped rapidly. Recently we decided it was time to dip our toes into the arena of CGI. We researched developers and found they range from $25 to $180 an hour for the kind of expertise we needed. The difference is based on the developer's cost of living.

We chose Leonard Ngu from Cameroon because he had an impressive portfolio and a love of nature. Cats are difficult to capture in art because they exude such an air of magnificence that is extremely hard to replicate. We don't have the budget and resources of Disney or Pixar, but we wanted our virtual cats to be as realistic as possible. We started on January 27 and by May 27 Leonard delivered our first CGI tiger. He set Big Cat Rescue up as a developer in the Oculus store so we can deploy the tiger for free to anyone with an Oculus Rift. The cost



of the tiger and the work to make it publicly available was $7,765. That is a lot for us to invest, but consider this:

The CGI tiger can live indefinitely and won't cost another dime. Just the food and vet care for a live tiger is over $10,000 a year and they can live 20+ years here.

The CGI tiger is never going to escape and maul or kill anyone. Since 1990 there have been 284 reported killings, maulings or escapes by tigers.

We can make the CGI tiger stand still and tolerate the viewer's inquisitive stare. Live wildcats avoid looking us in the eye because in their world, that's an invitation to a fight.
No one has to feel guilty about their interaction with a CGI tiger because they aren't causing the animal to be confined to a jail cell and they aren't invading the great cat's territory and possibly altering the tiger's ability to hunt and live naturally.

By the time you get this magazine, you should be able to download the Big Cat Rescue VR app in the Oculus store to your Rift for free. In the app you are in a forest, and a tiger comes running toward you. It stops, rolls around on the ground, takes a swipe at you, and then after a long pause, where you have plenty of time to check the tiger out from every angle, he runs back off into the woods. I found gazing into the golden eyes of this tiger to be just mesmerizing! For now it's only available on the Rift but our hope is to make it available across devices as the technology improves. Check it out and tell us what other cats you'd like to see.

ROARING THANKS TO OUR AUTOMATIC SUSTAINING DONORS!

Supporters who make their donations by monthly, quarterly or annual automatic donations from their bank account or credit card become members of our Sustaining Donor Society. For donors, this method of contributing has two advantages. First, it saves the time it takes to write checks or go online repeatedly to donate. Second, it conveniently spreads the donations out across the year for those who choose the monthly option. For the sanctuary, these donations are particularly helpful because it allows us to better plan our cash flow to care for the cats and process donations at the lowest cost. These automated donations can be changed or discontinued at any time. Members of our Sustaining Donor Society receive special recognition on our website, in the Big Cat Times, and on a sign in our tour waiting area. You can set up an automated donation by emailing finance@bigcatrescue.org or to use a credit card click the Give Now button on our website, then on the donation box select the frequency of the donation.

ON BEHALF OF THE CATS, THANK YOU!

This list is maintained manually, so if you make regular automatic donations and are not listed,
Please accept our apologies and email Finance@bigcatrescue.org so we can correct the list.

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Noor Alibay
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Marilyn Salazar
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Rosa Sandoval
Rodney Sanford
Septian Hendra Saputra
Frances Sartori
Linda Schwartz
Rafael Shamilov
Chelsea Sharma
Maritza Shaughnessy
Wendy Sherman
Helen Shino
Kelly Shortridge
Robbin Simi
Sandra Skillman
Arnold Smith

Joshua Smith
Larry Smith
Pamela Smith
Lcori Snow
Elisa Soto
Suzanne E Sparks
Lisa Spencer-Novak
Kathryn Springstead
Rosemarie
Stadelmlan
Anita Stanko
Zachary Stauber
Anne Steele
Casey Stelmach
Jaime Tafoya
Koren Taylor
Robert Taylor
Sabrina Taylor
Traci Teel
Karen Thomas
Margaret Thompson
Rosalie Townsend
Amanda Truitt
Lorene Tutell
Darlene Valdez
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VIRTUAL ZOO PROJECT

BY CAROLE BASKIN BCR FOUNDER & CEO

The ARzoo.me opened at the Westfield Citrus Park Shopping Center in March and was covered by all 4 major local television networks and the WB network. Initial response has been great and our full time staffer at the site, Holly Kopacz, reports that people have been most interested in the free fliers and takeaways we give out so that they can show their friends and family how to download the VidPic AR app to their phones, and then point them at the images to launch videos about each species of cat. For centuries before synthetics became available people wore clothing made from fur from animals to stay warm and as a form of adornment or show of luxury. But, as the technology of synthetic fur improved to a point where it offered as good or better warmth and look, and awareness of

the cruelty associated with the "fur trade" grew, one by one fashion designers converted to synthetics.

We believe a similar evolution is going to happen in the way zoos operate as the experience people can have with animals using Virtual Reality improves to a point where it provides a much more vivid and meaningful experience than staring at an animal in a cage. There is a commonly heard argument that looking at animals in cages will instill in people a concern about preserving the species in the wild. Evidence raises serious questions about this, but the strongest argument that we need a much more effective way to instill a passion for conservation may be to ask how well displaying animals in cages is working so far?

The global rate of species extinction "is already tens to hundreds of times higher than it has been, on average, over the last 10 million years," according to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), a UN committee, whose report was written by 145 experts from 50 countries. "The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever," said Sir Robert Watson, IPBES chair, adding that "transformative change" is needed to save the planet. More than one million species are currently threatened with extinction thanks to humans.

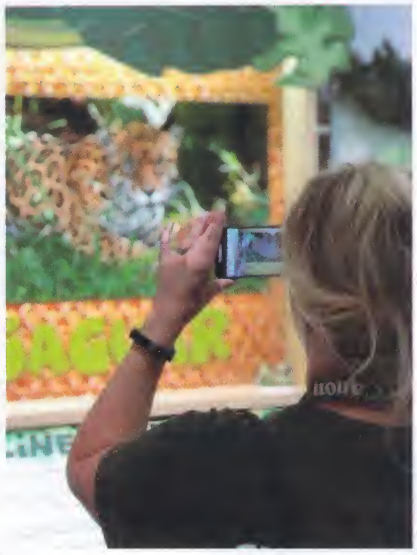
The same thinking that got us here is not going to save us. We have to try new approaches and an easy one is to end the practice of holding wild cats hostage in the name of conservation or education. If the only place you could ever see a wild cat was in the wild, then you can bet we would be moving heaven and earth to save their habitat. Protecting those eco systems for the apex carnivores, and the entire food chain that makes their existence possible, is how we save the planet and ourselves.

Some will make the short- sighted argument that promoting 360 and 3D immersive videos of the cats at Big Cat Rescue relies on cats in captivity, as if that somehow justifies the breeding and taking from the wild, that zoos do. The work we are doing to bring you virtual cats does currently rely on existing technology, but the more demand we can create for vivid, immersive experiences, the better the tech will get. I've lived long enough to see wild cat tracking go from following footprints left in the sand, to high tech, video enabled, camera traps that are triggered by movement and can then send an image over the Internet to my computer in a matter of moments.

The downside of most of those video clips is that by the time the cat triggers the camera, they have moved past the field of view, and all you see is a tail or back foot. If we can generate a huge demand for 360 degree videos of exotic cats then I foresee the next generation camera traps having a 360 view. Imagine the video capture is triggered from every angle and you will finally see the life of wild cats (and every other critter that trips the signal) in the wild, the way nature intended. Only then can you really learn about who they are and what their complex lives are like. As more people have headsets to experience these videos, and more content is generated, it will monetize protection of these wild theaters.

We have begun a relationship with Matt Ward, host of the Disruptors FM podcast, https://disruptors.fm/ where he will be mentioning our ARzoo.me on a regular basis. He gets 6-7,000 downloads per episode, but the demographic are people who care about the future of all of us. Matt says, "I started The Disruptors to bring together scientists, startups, innovators and thought leaders to have thoughtful discussions on the direction of our species. I believe we engineer the future we envision and by working together as one, we can build a better world." He gave us a drastically discounted price to advertise to his audience.

We have been approached by Westfield Shopping Centers and owners of other malls about duplicating the space in malls across Florida. Each installation will cost us about $10,000 to create all of the displays. It is too soon to know if it is likely to pay off in calls to Congress to support our federal bill to end the private possession of big cats and stop cub petting. (SeeBigCatAct.com) We don't know if it will generate enough awareness to the issues, or provide an increase in donations to make it worthwhile, but we are gathering facts and will be able to report soon. The big picture here is that as the VR technology improves, I believe what we now can only experience while wearing goggles will become available by walking into a VR room without goggles. Imagine a zoo where you walk through large buildings feeling like you are walking through the wild habitat, vividly close to the animals, watching what they really do in the wild instead of seeing them in the unnatural setting of a cage, and as you are doing this you receive a compelling audio message about why it is critical for the future of mankind to preserve these species and what you can do to help. My hope is that our relatively primitive augmented reality mall displays will be looked back on as the beginning of a wonderful transition to an enormously more meaningful zoo experience that does a much, much better job of fostering concern for conservation of these animals in the wild. I just hope we are not too late for some of our most endangered big cats.



More info: ARzoo.me

KIDS FOR KATS

BY JENNIFER LEON BCR DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH

In high school senior Alex Brewer's seventh hour class, she and her classmates were introduced to the idea of Genius Hour. What started as a semester-long fundraiser project evolved into an ongoing education-based charity called Big Hearts for Bigger Cats.

Big Hearts for Bigger Cats is determined to educate people on the current status of endangered big cats, why it is essential to conserve such species, and what can be done to help them. As the school year draws to a close, she in the process of raising money from sales for $1 Hat Day at her school and from online donations. Her next big step is the educational video and a big push advertising her Big Hearts for Bigger Cats Gofundme! page. Alex intends to carry on her work after graduating with annual fundraisers to benefit various big cat organizations. In her inaugural year, she chose to donate to Big Cat Rescue!

School fundraisers that allow students to wear fun clothing or accessories, such as a hat, are a popular and effective way to raise money and spread awareness! Take Oakland Avenue Charter School, for example. They raised $350 for the cats in February by allowing students to wear a non-uniform shirt on the last day of the month for a $1 donation. Every month the students choose a different cause, and these fun-fundraisers give them a simple way to support something they care about!

CONSERVATION PROJECTS FUNDED IN HONOR OF OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

Congratulations to the following Big Cat Rescuers who have been recognized for their outstanding commitment to the mission of Big Cat Rescue. In honor of this service they were each presented with the SAVE award. The SAVE award is a $1,000 donation made by Big Cat Rescue towards wild cat conservation in honor of the recipient.

Big Cat Rescuer **Lisa Spencer-Novak** is a great example of a volunteer we want working in the gift shop and giving tours. She always greets everyone with a smile and as an educator professionally she understands the importance of spreading our mission and message to tour guests. She's especially great with the kids and will often do all three tour time slots on a Sunday, freeing up interns for projects.

In honor of Lisa a $1,000 donation was made to the Bhutan Foundation.

The tiger is an apex predator and an umbrella species: ensuring their survival allows many species they need and live with to flourish in its large shared habitat. Bhutan is unique, in that its tiger habitat is contiguous across the whole country and extends from lowland

subtropical jungles all the way to sub-alpine forests. The highest altitude for tiger in the world was recorded in Wangchuck Centennial National Park at 4,400 masl (meters above sea level). Bhutan is also the only place on the planet where snow leopards and tigers are found in the same landscape.

Today fewer than 3,200 tigers exist in the wild, spread across 13 countries in Asia and the Russian Far East. However, killing for profit or in retaliation, destruction of habitat for industries or subsistence, and a thriving illicit global trade have drastically reduced tiger populations across its range.

A population baseline for Bhutan's mountain tigers is an important metric to help measure conservation success. It also allows conservationists to understand the spatial layout of important tiger habitat in order to better guide their protection. In addition, understanding tiger biology is critical to implementing effective conservation interventions.

This project is a long-term initiative to build a sound knowledge base to guide tiger conservation. Conservation policies and management using sound science is the only way we can ensure that resources are focused on the right interventions in the right areas. In other words, it enables higher return on conservation investment.

bhutanfound.org

Senior Keeper **Mark Mira** is a valued member of the big cat family. He is hard-working, focused, always willing to learn new skills, and is an excellent role model for other volunteers and interns. His genuine interest in his fellow rescuers is inspiring. He dedicates his time in several ways from caring for the cats to serving on the Volunteer Committee that is tasked with the duty of overseeing program policies and development.

In honor of Mark, a $1,000 donation was made to the Phoenix Fund to save the Amur leopards.

The Phoenix Fund was founded in March 1998 and is a registered Russian non-profit and non-governmental organization, located in Vladivostok. Their efforts involve monitoring the wildlife of the region, developing, implementing and administering important projects aimed at conserving the biodiversity of the Russian Far East. They work closely with foreign environmental organizations and are working to develop links the local authorities, other environmental NGO's, scientists, educational institutions and the public.

PROJECT PHOTOS FROM RESPECTIVE PROJECT WEBSITES

The Amur leopard is the most endangered cat in the world. It is balancing on the brink of extinction with a wild population totaling an estimated 100 individuals. Poaching is the main threat to the survival of the Amur leopard but they face other threats including destruction of habitat, loss of prey species and genetic impoverishment of the population as a result of inbreeding; time is running out to save them.

The Phoenix Fund implemented an initiative that will provide a highly skilled, mobile, law enforcement team with essential equipment and daily allowance for regular anti-

poaching patrols to be conducted in Amur leopard territories. The team works to not only protect the Amur leopard but to protect the ecosystems of the forest in which they live. The aim is that the initiative will reduce poaching through strengthening law enforcement, habitat protection, improving data collection, nature protection legislation, educating the public, and engaging local communities in conservation efforts.

fundphoenix.org

Keeper **Lacy Benton** is always happy to train new volunteers within the keeper department. She is driven and a real asset when it comes to completing special projects around the sanctuary. Lacy is also incredibly helpful with offsite events taking on an important role of educating the public on the plight of the big cats in captivity and how they can help make a real difference.

To show Lacy how much we appreciate her, a $1,000 donation was made to the African Impact Foundation to protect wild leopards.

Over a third of South Africa's leopard habitat is found in the Limpopo province, yet 95% of leopards in the area, are found outside of formally protected areas. Despite this, the majority of research has occurred inside of areas which house a mere 5% of the total population. This creates unreliable results to inform conservation practices and effective species management.

African Impact Foundation is collecting data on private lands to study the area where these cats are primarily residing, and influence evidence based conservation practices. Ultimately, it is only through focused research in these areas that efficient conservation solutions that will protect the species and individuals livelihoods can be protected, contributing to the health of the entire ecosystem.

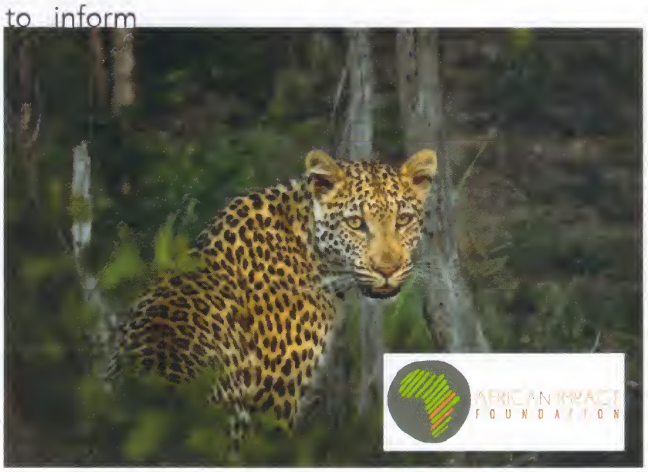
The aims of the project are to photograph leopards using camera traps, monitor wildlife corridors used by leopards, study population densities, create territorial/ movement maps for various predators, and to track down and remove snares.

To date African Impact Foundation has raised enough funding for 8 camera traps. So far these cameras have captured 1,250 photographs enabling the team to identify 8 species within the ecosystem and to conduct research on their behaviors. A $350 donation funds 1 camera trap for the study.

africanimpactfoundation.org

Do you want to help the big cats and make new friends? Big Cat Rescue is always looking for volunteers and interns. Keepers clean enclosures, feed the animals, and landscape. Partners work in the gift shop and guide tours of the sanctuary. Get all the details at:

BigCatRescue.org/ volunteer



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Hoover Tee, Graphic left chest and full back
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Rainbow Lion Fitted Tee with Rhinestone Embellisments
S, M, L, & XL **$25** XXL **$27**

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S, M, L, & XL **$25** XXL **$27**

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Choose Ares Cougar, Chaos Caracal, or Priya Tigress **$5**

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Carabiner Key Ring
Choose Gold, Black or Blue **$6 each**

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BCR Color Changing Tumbler with Straw
Choose Pink, Green, Blue, or Black 16.oz **$19**

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the black
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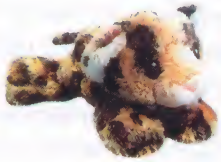

Lexi the leopard 5" **$11**

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fit Women 6-11 & Men 5-10 **$14 ea.**
Choose White Lion w/BCR Logo, Black Tiger w/ BCR Logo, or Lion March

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Kids Shirt - Dream Big Tiger
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Kids Shirt - Board to Be Wild
XS, S, M, & L **$17**

Kids Shirt - Big Cats of the World
XS, S, M, & L **$17**

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CHECK OUT OUR ALL OF OUR BIG CAT ITEMS: BIGCATRESCUE.BIZ

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2T, 3T, 4T **$15**

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Stretch Fit 8" Chakra Healing Stone Bracelet **$19**

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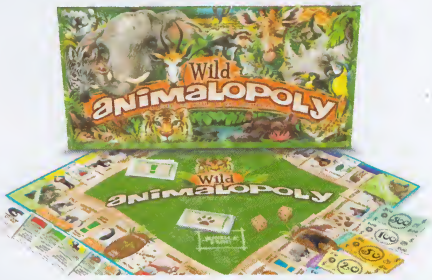

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All kits include: 4-page color fact sheet about the species, BCR decal, Registration Card to select the cat of your choice. 8x10 color photo of the cat you choose to sponsor with the cat name and your name as sponsor printed on it. Sponsor levels below include these additional benefits:

$25 BIG CAT BUDDY – KIDS: Wildcat coloring pages

$25 BIG CAT SUPPORTER: 10% off card

$50 BIG CAT FRIEND: 10% off card, 1 Day Tour Pass

$100 BIG CAT PROTECTOR: 10% off card, 2 Day Tour Passes, 30 mailing labels

$250 BIG CAT CONSERVATOR: 10% off card, 4 Day Tour Passes, 60 mailing labels

$500 BIG CAT WARRIOR: Conservator benefits plus 4"x4" photo donor plaque displayed at gift shop and 6"x12" engraved sign displayed on tour path, Private Tour for 10

$1,000 BIG CAT HERO: Conservator benefits plus 6"x6" photo donor plaque displayed at gift shop and 9"x12" engraved sign displayed on tour path, Private Tour for 10

$2,500 BIG CAT CHAMPION: Conservator benefits plus 8"x8" photo donor plaque displayed at gift shop and 12"x12" photo donor sign displayed on tour path, Founder Tour for 10

$5,000 KING OF BEASTS: Conservator benefits plus 12"x12" photo donor plaque displayed at gift shop and 18"x24" photo donor sign displayed on tour path, Founder Tour for 10

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TOUR & PROGRAMS

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

BIGCATRESCUE.ORG/TICKETS

(813) 920-4130

KIDS TOUR

Children of all ages and their parents can learn about big cats on a guided tour of the sanctuary. Tour is given on a child's educational level and is 1hr. Children must be accompanied by adult.

DAY TOUR

Guided tour of the sanctuary. Learn about the big cats and the threats they face both in the wild as well as in captivity. Hear their personal stories of how they were rescued. Tour is 1.5 hrs. No children under 10 years.

FEEDING TOUR

Follow a keeper as they feed the big catsand learn about their nutritional needs in captivity. Tour is 1 hr. No children under 10 years.

BIG CAT KEEPER TOUR

This tour takes you behind the scenes. Enjoy making enrichment (treats and food puzzles) for the big cats and watch as the keepers hand out the enrichment you made. You will also observe operant training sessions with the big cats. Tour is 2 hrs. No children under 10 years.

GIFT CERTIFICATES FOR ALL TOURS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT BIGCATRESCUE.BIZ

Prices and availability for all tours are subject to change. Visit us online for the most current tour information. Closed Thursdays, Thanksgiving & Christmas Day. Tours may be canceled due to inclement weather.

THE BIG CAT TIMES ORDER FORM Summer 2019

BILLING ADDRESS (please print legibly) **ORDER DATE:** _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

RECIPIENT ADDRESS (if different than above)

Name: _____

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Standard playing card deck. Each card features a different BCR cat. $14.86

DESCRIPTION	QTY	SIZE	PRICE EACH	TOTAL PRICE
SPONSORSHIP KIT:				
AUTOMATIC GIVING PROGRAM - SUSTAINING DONOR SOCIETY	Please charge my card this amount each month:			
PAVE THE WAY BRICK (See description and instructions below)		4X8	$150	
PAVE THE WAY BRICK (See description and instructions below)		8X8	$300	
PERIMETER WALL		1 FOOT	$100	
			GRAND TOTAL	

PERSONALIZATIONS (inscription to appear on the brick or wall fund sign, or brief note to be included on a card sent with order to recipient)

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CREDIT CARD INFO: VISA MasterCard DISCOVER AMERICAN EXPRESS Cards

Card #: __ __ __ __ / __ __ __ __ / __ __ __ __ / __ __ __ __

Exp. Date (MMYY): __ __ / __ __ **CCV# (back of card)** __ __ __

Signature: _____

AUTOMATIC GIVING PROGRAM - JOIN THE SUSTAINING DONOR SOCIETY: Big Cat Rescue makes it easy and convenient to donate monthly with no worry. You can do this either by credit card or by direct debit to a checking account for as little as $5/month. For credit card donations, just fill in the highlighted line on the order form above and provide your credit card information. For checking account direct debit email finance@bigcatrescue.org, or leave a message for Howard at 813-920-4130. This is a G-R-R-eat way to spread out your donations and provide steady support that is so meaningful for the cats.

PAVE THE WAY BRICK: Laser engraved bricks line the paths leading to our Trading Post Gift Shop and to the entrance of the tour path. 4" x 8" Brick: 29 characters per line, total of 5 lines OR heart or paw print symbol, 14 characters, total of 5 lines. 8" x 8" Brick: 14 characters per line, total of 6 lines OR With heart or paw print symbol, 14 characters, total of 4 lines. To order complete form above and include personalization in provided area.

PERIMETER WALL FUND: To best protect our big cats we have constructed a solid perimeter wall surrounding the property. $100 funds 1 linear foot of wall. Donors will be recognized on a permanent sign at the sanctuary.

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Bravo (left) and Tango (right)

BOBCAT BROTHERS GO FREE FOLLOWING NATIVE AMERICAN BLESSING

Bravo and Tango are brothers who were orphaned when they were just a couple of weeks old after their den site had been burned to clear land for development in the Florida panhandle.

The inseparable pair were introduced to two other orphans, Echo and Foxtrot, making the largest grouping of bobcats in the history of our Bobcat Rehabilitation Program. Their antics were streamed 24/7 on web cams installed in their 4,600 square foot enclosure gaining a massive increase in the number of followers tuning in.

In order to avoid straining a single environment with the release of four carnivores, we decided to divide up the group and release Bravo and Tango near their original home in northern Florida and Echo and Foxtrot south of the sanctuary.

Echo and Foxtrot were the first to be released as shown in our previous issue of the Big Cat Times. Soon afterward a release site was secured for Bravo and Tango.

The brothers were transported to the furthest release site we have utilized to date, nearly six and a half hours away. Big Cat Rescuers and Rehab Team members Jamie Veronica, Kathryn Stapleton, Karma Hurworth and Brittany Mira hit the road early morning with Bravo and Tango in their transport crates. The two were very relaxed and napped for the majority of the trip.

The release site spanned more than 1,000 acres and is protected by the Creek Indians. Upon our arrival tribe members performed a blessing on Bravo and Tango before they were sent on their way. This was a very special send off that will be remembered fondly. Tango was first to emerge from the transport. At first he appeared a little confused. He looked around and then back at his rescuers then turned and bolted into the nearby tree line. Bravo was a little more hesitant, but moments later followed his brother's cue. We are so happy for these boys and their second chance at living free. It is especially thanks to your support that we are able to give wild bobcats like Bravo and Tango

Bravo (left) and Tango (right as kittens)

Rehabbers Karma & Kathryn release the brothers

Karma, Kathryn, Brittany and Jamie at the release site

the opportunity to live as they were meant to, in the wild.

BIG SURPRISE IS ANOTHER FIRST FOR BOBCAT REHAB PROGRAM

Sky, a nuiscance bobcat, was trapped and gave birth to a litter of three kittens in the trap as a result of the stress

This year has been one of many firsts for the Bobcat Rehabilitation Program. Bravo, Tango, Echo and Foxtrot formed the largest grouping of bobcats in rehabilitation. Sky and her kittens would form our second grouping of four bobcats, but also surprised us in an unexpected way.

Sky was captured on a farm by a trapper. She was considered a nuisance by the farmer and was damaging his property. The stress of being trapped caused this expecting mother to give birth to three kittens in the trap. Not knowing what to do the trapper, surrendered the family to Big Cat Rescue.

Sky was not welcome at the farm and releasing her with her kittens in a new territory would most certainly lead to their demise. This was an unusual circumstance that our rehab team has not had faced before. Every step of the way was a learning experience.

The decision was made to house Sky and her kittens Cobalt (boy), Indigo and Azul (girls) in our rehab enclosure where she could care for them until they were old enough to eat whole prey and follow her around. Once released back into the wild they would need to be able to accompany her on her journey to find a new den site.

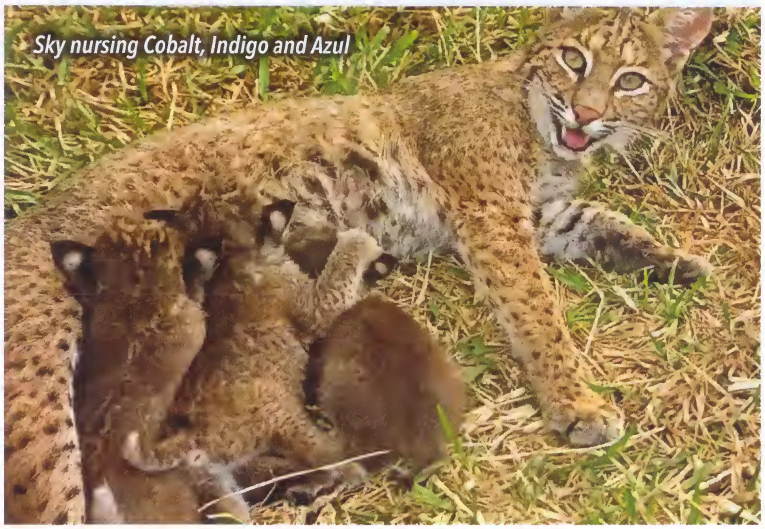
Sky and her kittens were an invaluable source of education for the rehab team. Being able to witness and document first hand how a mother cares for her young, teaches them how to drink water, and shows them what foods are good to eat was a priceless experience that will benefit future orphaned bobcats.

Once Cobalt, Indigo, and Azul were weaned and eating whole prey on their own Sky seemed to know it was time to move on and rescuers responded. A release site of 1,200 acres teeming with wildlife would be the purr-fect home for

Sky was a very attentive mother

Kittens at 1 week old

Kittens at 4 weeks old



Sky nursing Cobalt, Indigo and Azul

Once her kittens were weaned, Sky was ready to move them to a new location

this wild family. Sky and her kittens were transported in the wooden crate that had served as their den during rehabilitation. The crate was camouflaged and set on a quiet and secluded area of the property with close access to water.

The crate was left hidden among the palmetto bushes so that Sky and her family could continue to use it while she found a new more suitable den site. Camera traps deployed at the release site captured images of Sky collecting her kittens and moving them away over the course of the following days. We hope that additional cameras in the area will continue to collect images of Sky and her kittens in the months to come so we can continue to monitor their progress.

The wooden crate Sky and her family had used as a den during their time in rehab was transported to the release site and left there so they could continue to utilize it until they found a new den.

RELEASE DATE IN SIGHT FOR ALPHA

Alpha was injured and orphaned when she was just 8 weeks old. She was very thin and had a broken jaw. Dr. Boorstein repaired her jaw with permanent wires and thankfully within in a short time she made a full recovery.

Alpha easily transitioned from soft foods which were required post surgery to whole prey. Once she reclaimed her taste for natural food sources she was graduated to live prey. Alpha's wild instincts remained in tact and she embraced her role as a predator.

We had hoped that we would be able to introduce her to a pair of brothers, Bravo and Tango, who were similar in age. Unfortunately complications with Alpha's jaw would prolong her need for rehabilitation.

During a follow up exam of the fractured jaw Dr. Boorstein became concerned that one of her molars had been displaced either by the accident that injured her jaw or due to a growth deformity. The molar was not positioned to erupt properly and if it did not, the tooth could cause serious issues as Alpha grew. If this tooth were to grow in crooked, or not at all, it could be at risk for infection. In the wild these cats do not get treatment for their injuries and a simple tooth infection could spell the end for Alpha.

Only time would tell if Alpha's tooth would grow in normally. The veterinary team took x-rays of the molar and then scheduled to re-examine the tooth in a month.

Four weeks later, the tooth had not changed position. Board Certified Veterinary Dentist and Oral Surgeon Dr. Gingerich extracted the molar during one of his recent visits. Removal of this tooth will ensure that Alpha would not be impaired following her release.

Alpha

In an unfortunate turn of events dental x-rays indicated that one of Alpha's canines may suffer a deformity as well. It appears as though the pulp chamber of the canine tooth has not fully formed at the apex (top of tooth in the jaw). However, this could be age related and may resolve itself in the coming months. Another exam has been scheduled in the coming weeks to determine if the chamber closes in at the top as it should.

We have our fingers and paws crossed that Alpha's teeth will continue to grow in properly so that she can be returned to the wild as soon as possible.

TWO ORPHANS SAME STORY

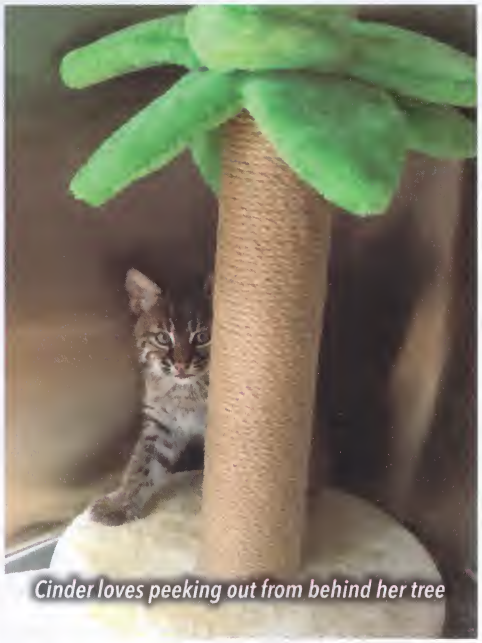
In a matter of two weeks two young bobcat kittens were discovered alone in the middle of the road in different areas of Florida.

Cinder - 6 week old female bobcat

It is unknown if they were in fact orphaned or if the mother may have hid nearby when concerned citizens approached. In some cases young wildlife that appear to be orphaned may not be. It is best, if possible, to observe these wild babies quietly and from a distance to see if their mother returns.

6-week-old female bobcat Cinder and 8-week-old male bobcat Ash

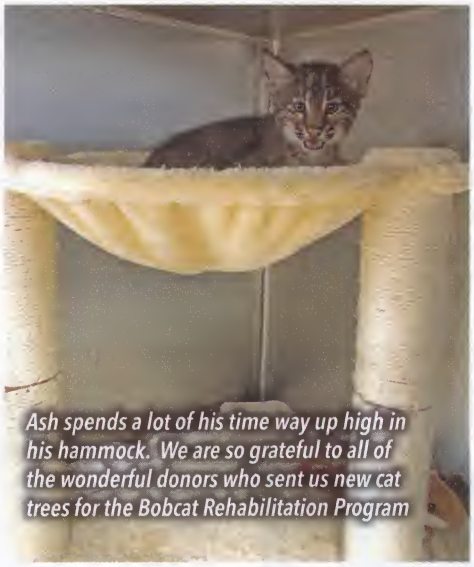
Ash - 8 week old male bobcat



Cinder loves peeking out from behind her tree

became the very first patients of our Bobcat Hospital. (As you may have noticed by their names along with Sky and her kittens this year's theme for naming the bobcats in our rehabilitation program will be colors.)

Cinder and Ash both arrived thin, dehydrated and overloaded with parasites. Both will spend their first few weeks isolated and in quarantine.



Ash spends a lot of his time way up high in his hammock. We are so grateful to all of the wonderful donors who sent us new cat trees for the Bobcat Rehabilitation Program

Once they are treated and cleared of these infestations they will be introduced to one another. They currently reside in neighboring cages and are both very playful. We are counting down the days until they can be playmates!

HELP FUND BCR'S BOBCAT REHABILITATION PROGRAM

BCR Bobcat Rehabilitation Tees available in dozens of colors. Several styles to choose from:

BigCatRescue.biz

Proceeds help care for orphaned and injured wild Florida bobcats.

FIRST "BIG CAT RESCUE GIVING DAY"

WAS A ROARING SUCCESS, RAISING OVER $122,000!

BY SUSAN BASS DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

On May 2nd, Big Cat Rescue held the first-ever Big Cat Rescue Giving Day to raise funds to end exploitive tiger and lion cub petting.

For the past five years, we participated each May in an annual fundraising day in our community called Give Day Tampa Bay. It quickly became one of the sanctuary's most significant fundraisers of the year – raising over $105,000 for our cats in 2018 alone.

But in 2019 the organizers decided to apply their resources elsewhere. We were initially disappointed that the cats would lose the vital financial support we'd come to rely upon each year. Then the idea hit us: Let's continue the tradition with our own fundraising day in May and hold the first-ever Big Cat Rescue Giving Day!

Our inaugural Big Cat Rescue Giving Day was even more special because the first $30,000 in donations were matched thanks to generous donations by Pilot Bank, Pam & Larry Trissel and a donor who wished to remain anonymous. Our goal was to raise $120,000 and we surpassed it, raising a total of $121,848. THANK YOU to everyone who donated and helped make this day such a success!!

You may wonder why we were raising funds to end cub petting. Big Cat Rescue has a dual mission. The first part is to provide the best possible home we can to the cats who reside in our care. But the second part of our mission -- to stop the abuse of these magnificent animals in captivity -- is what can enable us to improve the lives of THOUSANDS of big cats beyond those we can care for at the sanctuary. That broader mission is where we will use the donations received during Big Cat Rescue Giving Day.

The single biggest cause of mistreatment of captive big cats in America is cub petting. The tiger and lion cubs used in this despicable "industry" are abruptly taken from their mothers shortly after birth. Then, when they are just a few months old but already too big and dangerous to pet, there is no tracking of where they end up…or of how many die or are slaughtered to sell their parts into the international trade. Some end up as pets in backyards. Some are sent to roadside zoos where they are kept as breeding pairs in tiny, barren cages and are "speed bred" as fast as possible, which is not natural and a miserable, unhealthy life for the mother tigers. Our tigress Priya came to us from suffering this fate for years. Because these exploiters need a constant supply of infant cubs, this cruel industry is responsible for the vast majority of tiger breeding.

What caused Ringling to close and Sea World to stop their orca shows? As public awareness of the mistreatment of the animals grew, fewer and fewer people attended the shows. The same thing can happen with cub petting! It looks innocent and adorable on its face, but if knowledge of the abusive and cruel back story of this industry becomes widely known enough, together we can stop it!

Digital marketing allows us to target people visiting areas of the country that offer cub petting and arm them with the real story by drawing them to our cubtruth.com web page with intriguing online ads. This kind of internet marketing makes it possible to reach people for a tiny fraction of the per-person cost of traditional advertising. With the help of PPK, our Tampa advertising agency that has generously worked for us pro bono for years, and the funds we raised on Giving Day, we have the opportunity to stop this horrible trade by diminishing demand through public awareness. Our initial five-month campaign is expected to educate about half a million potential cub petting customers so they know not to support this despicable trade. Now THAT'S something to roar about!

Sad Farewell

Taking care of 58 exotic cats is a roller coaster ride of emotions as we try to provide the best possible life for them and yet deal with the gut wrenching decisions of life and death. Of our 58 cats, 33 are over the age of 12, which is as long as they usually live in zoos or the wild. An amazing 23 are over the age of 15 (90+ in human years). More incredible, 12 are 20 years or older. It is with heavy hearts we must say goodbye to these beautiful cats who have touched our hearts forever.

CAMERON

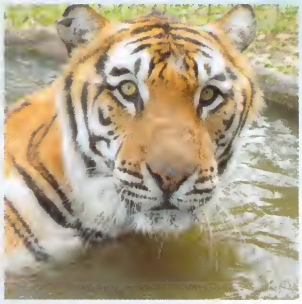
2000 - 2019

Cameron was rescued along with Zabu in 2004. The pair had been housed together at a road side zoo and we can only assume the intention was to breed and produce unnatural and genetically deformed novelties known as ligers. Immediately following their rescue Cameron and Zabu were separated. A vasectomy was performed on Cameron to prohibit breeding, but allow for him to keep his beautiful mane. However keeping his mane also meant keeping his territorial tendencies that normally dissipate when a male cat is neutered. Cameron was very possessive over Zabu which led to the need to spay her and subsequently neuter him. Cameron eventually lost his mane, but this was a small price to pay to be able to live out his days with his one true love Zabu. Cameron and Zabu were never far from one another. The two loved spooning in the sun on cool days and napping lazily in the shade on the hot ones. They were big fans of toys and enrichment and were always excited to see what fun new thing they were going to get to play with. Cameron started and ended each day at Big Cat Rescue with his mighty roar. A familiar sound that will be deeply missed. Zabu was the light hearted one always chuffing and playfully rolling, always putting a smile on her keepers faces. This iconic duo will be greatly missed by all. Sadly both Cameron and Zabu, who had lived together their entire lives, passed away within weeks of each other. Cameron's body was invaded with lymphoma and Zabu succumbed to kidney disease. While kidney disease is a common end for older cats we can't help but wonder if Zabu died from a broken heart after losing her sweet Cameron.

ZABU

2000 - 2019

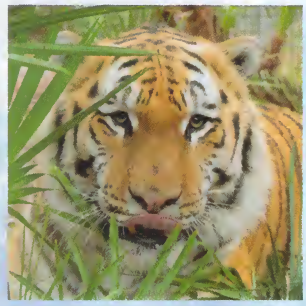
ANDRE



1996 - 2019

Andre was rescued in 2011 along with his brother Arthur and sister Amanda. He had been born into a life of exploitation as a photo prop in New Jersey in 1996. This facility was later shut down sending two dozen tigers to a sanctuary in Texas in 2003. Unfortunately this facility went bankrupt and in 2011 Andre was on the move again to his final home at Big Cat Rescue. Andre was the friendliest of the three big cats. His gentle soul touched many hearts. In the end kidney disease claimed his life.

SETH



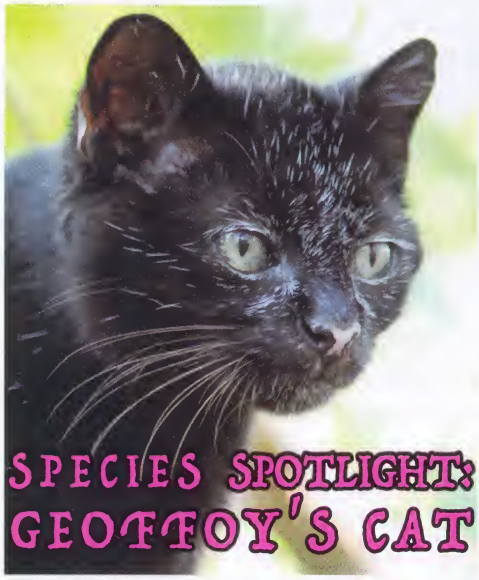
2006 - 2019

Seth and Gabrielle were rescued in 2016 from a large breeding operation in Colorado that supplied the tiger photo prop trade. In addition Charaka, Andy, and Priya were also rescued. Their rescue along with dozens of other big cats would be the largest big cat rescue in the U.S. history. Seth was the biggest of the tigers. He had a fun loving and goofy personality. His determination to love life despite having suffered for nearly a decade prior to his rescue was inspiring. Like too many before him, Seth's kidneys ultimately failed.

GABRIELLE

1997 - 2019

Gabrielle was the tiniest of tigers. She was petite and shy. Gabrielle relished her days napping in the soft green grass or tucked away in the shade of her den. Her final years were spent receiving unconditional love from her keepers. Sadly cancer called Gabrielle home.



SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: GEOFFOY'S CAT

Fun Facts: The Geoffroy's cat is mainly nocturnal, but does hunt at dawn and dusk. Geoffroy's cats are strong swimmers that regularly enter the water, and have been recorded frequently swimming fast flowing rivers 100 feet wide.

Size and Appearance: Geoffroy's cats are amongst the earth's smallest wildcats and are about the same size as a domestic cat. Usually those living in the south of their range are bigger than those in the north, with males being larger than females. The fur has many black spots, but its background color varies between regions: a coat of brownish-yellow is most common in the north, whereas farther south it is grayish. The tail and limbs have dark banks, with similar markings on the cat's cheeks and the top of its head and neck. Melanistic (dark) forms seem fairly common, mostly in wetland or forested areas.

Habitat: Geoffroy's cats primarily live along rivers within thick scrubby vegetation, but will also inhabit savannas, open woodlands, marshes and grasslands.

Distribution: Geoffroy's cats occur in the south of South America in the Pampas, Andes, and Gran Chaco areas.

Reproduction and Offspring: Geoffroy's cats are polygynous, which means that one male mates with multiple females. The male will mate with most of those females within his protected range. The mating season takes place from December to May. Gestation lasts for 67-78 days and females can produce one litter per year of one to four kittens. The mother gives birth inside a den which could be a rock crevice, bushes or a nook up in a tree.

Social System: Secretive and solitary, this animal spends much time in the tree. Geoffroy's cats communicate via purrs, hisses, snarls, calls, and growl sounds.

Past BCR Resident: Saratoga, female Geoffroy's Cat

Hunting and Diet: Geoffroy's cats are excellent hunters, and will eat a wide variety of animals, mainly birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, wild guinea pigs, rodents, hares, small agoutis, and other small mammals. Geoffroy's cats hunt in trees, in water and on the ground.

Past BCR Resident: Nico, female Geoffroy's Cat

Threats: The greatest threat to Geoffroy's cats is human disturbance of their habitat due to deforestation, and over-hunting for the fur trade.

Status: IUCN Red List: Least Concern The Geoffroy´s Cat is listed as Least Concern because it is widespread and abundant over most of its range. **CITES Appendix I**

BigCatRescue.org/ geoffroy-cat-facts/

Geoffroy's cat was named after Geoffroy St. Hilaire, a 19th-century French naturalist who worked in the field of evolutionary theory, his travels taking him to South America. There are four animals that bear his name: the cat, a tamarin, a spider monkey, and a bat.

VET REPORTS:

FRANKIE'S FOLLOW UP

Frankie the bobcat

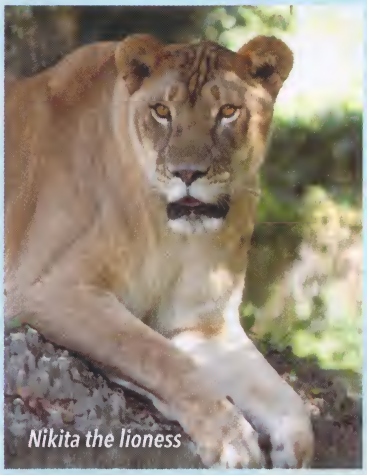
Earlier this year Frankie the bobcat was sedated for a routine exam that all of our new residents receive. These intake exams include blood work, xrays, eye check, and inspection of the teeth. Dr. Wynn discovered that three of Frankie's canine teeth were damaged. Our options were to extract all three teeth or schedule for a specialist to perform root canals to save them. Frankie had not been showing any discomfort prior to exam and was eating well so the vet team opted for the root canals.

Dr. Gingerich teaches Dr. Boorstein the fine art of a root canal

We are so lucky to have the help of Board Certified Veterinary Dentist and Oral Surgeon Dr. Gingerich of the Pet Dental Center to provide top notch care for our big cats. Dr. Gingerich performed three root canals and saved Frankie's canines. Frankie has made a full recovery and is surely feeling so much better.

Xrays of the root canal progression mid way

BIGGEST CAT AT BCR GETS THE WORKS


Nikita the lioness

Nikita the lioness is the largest big cat living at the sanctuary weighing a massive 426 pounds. When she became lethargic and inappetant the vet team knew that she needed to be examined. This would be no easy feat due to her size.

Dr. Boorstein and Dr. Wynn teamed up for the big event and several Big Cat Rescuers pitched in to help lift the sedated lioness in and out of the transport cage and onto the exam table. Maneuvering Nikita throughout the exam was daunting.

Big Cat Rescuers stand by ready to help lift and maneuver Nikita

Overall Nikita was in good health. Her blood work, xrays, and physical exam found nothing out of the ordinary. However, during her dental exam Dr. Boorstein found a bad molar tooth that required extraction. It seemed as though this small thing would not have caused Nikita to be acting the way she had, but nonetheless the tooth was removed.

Dr. Boorstein and Dr. Wynn xray Nikita with the help of BCR staff Victor Alonso and Lauren Buckingham

The next few days were tense as Nikita was very angry with her keepers over the ordeal of being darted for sedation. Thankfully this aggression lessened day after day. We are happy to report that Nikita is back to her usual self, is eating well, and has forgiven her rescuers.

HELPING OTHERS

Big Cat Rescue is very fortunate to have such a wonderful following of supporters and donors who fund everything from the food the cats eat to the hospital where they receive veterinary care. Whenever possible we try to help others who do not have these medical facilities

as readily available.

We were recently contacted by another facility that had a cougar and a bobcat in need of veterinary

Dr. Boorstein examines a visiting patient with the assistance of Kathryn Stapleton and Afton Tasler

care. We were happy to help and thanks to Dr. Boorstein both cats received full exams.

The bobcat was in overall good health. She was a little thin so a special diet was formulated specifically for her and a regular weigh in showed she gained over 2 pounds in just as many weeks.

The cougar was a different story. He was very thin and had an infection in his jaw that just wouldn't heal. Dr. Boorstein discovered a rotted fragment of canine root that was the cause of the infection. The fragment and surrounding infected tissue were removed and the entire area was sterilized before it was sutured closed. The large wound and weakened surrounding tissue concerned the vet team.

Before and after of the cougar's surgical site which healed very well

The healing process would be slow and may be prone to complications. It would be critical that the cougar eat well and take all of his medications following his procedure.

Big Cat Rescuers were thrilled with this cougar's progress. Not only did he take all of his medications right on schedule, but his appetite soared. He was put on a special diet and gained 20 pounds during his 2 month stay.

These two very special cats would not have had this opportunity had it not been for all of YOU. On their behalf we are forever grateful.

SUSPICIOUS MASS

King Tut

King Tut is a 10 year old male Savannah Cat. In recent months he developed a significant limp. Keepers had also observed a small mass on his side.

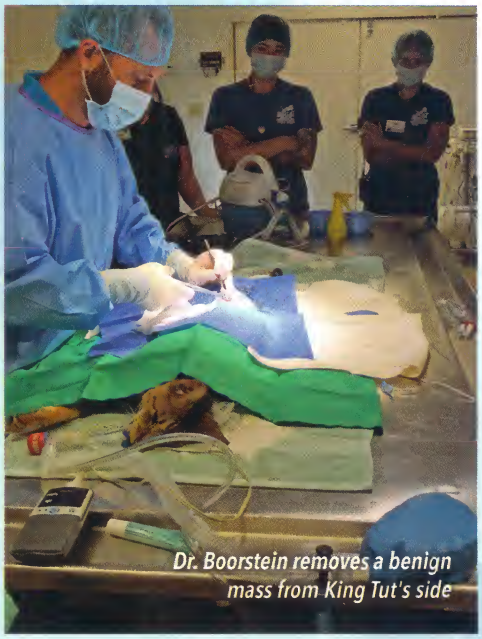
Jamie Veronica takes radiographs of King Tut as Brittany Mira films the procedure

Xrays and a physical exam of King Tut's knee suggested he had sustained an injury of some kind and had possibly torn a ligament in the joint. His xrays will be sent to a specialist to discuss surgical options if any.

The mass on his side was surgically removed and sent to the lab for analysis. Results determined the mass to be a benign cyst.

King Tut has completely recovered from his surgery and now awaits his consult with a specialist.

YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS HELP PROVIDE THE BEST CARE POSSIBLE TO ALL OF OUR RESIDENTS



Dr. Boorstein removes a benign mass from King Tut's side

DONATIONS

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Estate Of Constance Brady $201,446
Estate Of Elfriede Lehn $70,000
Estate Of Claire Mooers $30,000
Fox Trust $11,459
Shauna Woolley $10,000
Deb Quimby $5,300
Stephen Chupack $5,000
Estate Of April Etheridge $5,000
Outback Bowl Through Board Member Rita Lowman $5,000
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Lead Forensics Inc. $4,073
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Thank you for your support! If your donation came toward the end of the quarter, it may not have been entered into our database in time for this newsletter and will appear in the next. Donation data entry is manual and subject to occasional errors, so if your donation should appear and does not, please email:

Katie.Nikic@
BigCatRescue.org

While the list of donors of $100-199 is too long for the print edition, they are very much appreciated and recognized in the online edition.

- Howard Baskin,
Treasurer

KITTEN CABANA GETS MAJOR UPGRADE TO BEAT THE HEAT

Big Cat Rescue partnered with the Humane Society of Tampa Bay in 2013 to provide fostering for kittens that were too young to be adopted. To date our Big Cat Rescuers have fostered 778 kittens and moms! This program gives our volunteers and interns valuable experience they can use to help their local communities.

Our foster kittens reside in intern housing at night. During the day time they are brought to the Kitten Cabana located in the heart of the sanctuary. This space has a small indoor room for supplies and a large screened in porch filled with cat trees and toys where the kittens can play, socialize with other kittens, and are visited by the staff, volunteers, and interns throughout the day. All of this special attention ensures that these adorable adoptables will make the purr-fect addition to any home. Once the kittens reach weight requirements they are returned to the Humane Society where they are spayed or neutered and then put up for adoption.

With temperatures reaching the mid 90's throughout the month of May we made the decision to modify our Kitten Cabana porch to ensure the kittens would remain cool and comfortable during the upcoming Summer months. All of the screening was replaced with windows, insulation was added to the surrounding walls and an air-conditioning unit was installed. The kittens are loving this upgraded space and are much more playful now that it is cooler. Big Cat Rescuers are also enjoying the welcome reprieve from the scorching heat!

A big thank you to Lowes Home Improvement on Waters Avenue in Tampa and Store Manager Glen Hernandez for sponsoring part of this worthwhile project!

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